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THE AGITATION
AGAINST
THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

AN ADDRESS

BY

VISCOUNT HALIFAX

President of E. C. U.

READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING AT THE CHURCH HOUSE

ON

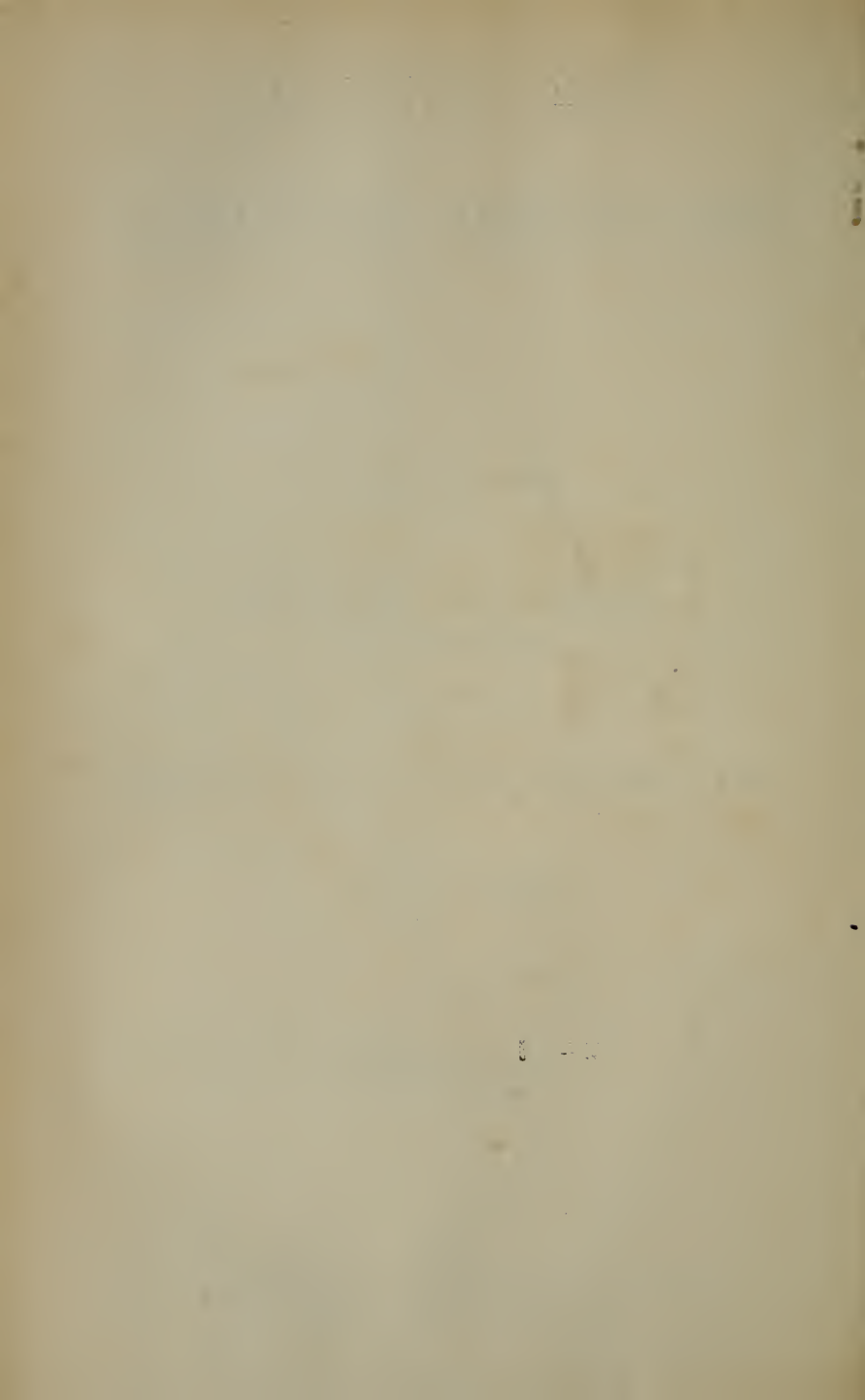
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ENGLISH CHURCH UNION.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

THE crisis in the Church—that seems to be the proper way of describing the present agitation—has now lasted some sixteen months. It is running the course which might have been predicted for it, and that course suggests certain observations to which I desire to draw your attention to-day.

In the first place, we have to thank the agitation for demonstrating the necessity of such an organisation as this Union.

If so many of our countrymen were not as ignorant and prejudiced about Church matters as they are, if all the members of the Church acted up to their principles, the Union might be dissolved to-morrow.

Unfortunately, we have only to look round to see how very far this is from being the case, and till those who profess their belief in the Catholic Church every time they recite the Creed, understand a little better what such belief involves, a Society such as ours is an absolute necessity to defend elementary Church principles and practices from the ignorant and unprincipled attacks to which they are exposed.

In the next place, we may thank the present agitation for the way it is attracting attention to the teaching and claims of the Church. The Press is being utilised for the dissemination of Church principles as the Press has never been utilised before, and an opportunity is offered us for spreading the truth which we never could have made for ourselves.

St. Paul speaks of those who, in his day, preached the Gospel out of strife and contention. He would be a bold man who credited the Kensits, the Walshes, and those who are ignorant and foolish enough to believe what they say, with preaching any gospel but the gospel of prejudice and ill-will, but even so, their action attracts attention to Church principles, and in doing so they exemplify the fact that the very difficulties stirred up against the truth often become the instruments for its diffusion.

SOME HEART-SEARCHING QUESTIONS.

Again, the present agitation is having a most wholesome effect upon ourselves. Are we not all more determined, whatever it may cost us, to speak up for what we know to be the truth? Are we not all more resolved to vindicate the Church's rights? Are we not also being compelled to ask ourselves questions we are very apt to shirk, but which it is very necessary we should face? Let me enumerate some of them.

How comes it that we are obliged to oppose those who claim to be members of the same Church and bound by the same principles as ourselves?

Why is it that whereas formerly in England everyone professed the same faith, and there were no religious divisions, now, not only are the great masses of the population indifferent to the Church, but, with the exception of America, there is no country in the world in which there are so many independent and conflicting religious sects as in England?

How comes it that at a time when the country was infinitely poorer than it is now, when the whole of its population did not, I suppose, equal the present population of London, the self-sacrifice of our forefathers was able to cover England with magnificent cathedrals and abbeys like Canterbury, York, Durham, Lincoln, Ely, and Westminster; with colleges like those of Oxford and Cambridge; with churches such as those at Beverley, Coventry,



Sherborne, and Wimborne—I say nothing of all the parish churches throughout the land, and of all the monastic buildings now, alas ! in ruins—and that since those days, with the exception of rebuilding St. Paul's Cathedral after the fire of London, which was done by the nation, and the cathedral at Truro, which, after all, is a very small church, and is not yet finished, no church which can be compared with any one of the churches I have named has been built in England ?

Again, we are disturbed at the present moment with the difficulties attending the administration of our Poor Law. We feel that a state of things in which it is possible for the deserving poor to have the vision of no other home than the workhouse before them as the only refuge for their old age, is not one which either contrasts favourably with the past, or suggests any exact following of the precepts of Christianity in the present.

Nor are we reassured by the reflection that in a large proportion of such workhouses no provision is made for the celebration of the Sacraments, or for the administration of the rites of the Church ; and we inquire why it is that the members of a Church who profess “ that it is above all things necessary to believe the Catholic faith ” appear to be so largely indifferent to the spiritual needs of those committed to their charge. It is not so with the Roman Catholic body in England.

Again, in regard to a kindred subject, we have to inquire how it has come about that in a country which is not irreligious the creeds of Christendom are excluded from all schools established by Parliamentary authority ; or, again, how it happens that, on a matter of such vital importance as the doctrine of the Sacraments, it is possible for clergy in the Church of England to affirm that our Divine Lord is truly, really, and substantially present in the Blessed Sacrament, and that absolution after confession imparts forgiveness of sin, and possible—remark, I do not say rightly possible in view of their obligations, but possible in fact—for other clergy, even for Bishops

and dignitaries of the Church of England, to declare that the Real Presence is a superstition, and the practice of confession a snare.

Comprehension is no doubt a good thing, and no doubt also theologians have sometimes insisted on logical deductions from revealed truths as conditions for communion, in a way that has been a stumbling block to souls, and done injury to the Church, but legitimate comprehension cannot cover diametrically opposite teaching about the Sacraments. How comes it that such opposite teaching prevails in the Church of England? Again, why is it when the more unpopular portions of the Church's teaching, say the doctrine of Confession and absolution, are attacked in Parliament and elsewhere, the Heads of the Church, with few exceptions, seem so incapable of standing up for their clergy, and of vindicating in plain terms without compromise or apology, the teaching and practice of the Church? Why is it that an agitation like the present is sufficient to induce Bishops to take proceedings against clergy and congregations who have endeavoured to restore some of its ancient dignity and splendour to the service of God's House, on assumptions of illegality which it is impossible to prove, but that nothing similar is ever threatened against those whose whole teaching and practice contradicts in the plainest manner what the Church enjoins. A Bishop sanctions evening Communions and forbids Reservation. Why? He forbids the accustomed use of incense, the carrying of lights in procession, and Prayers for the Dead, the observance of Corpus Christi, or All Souls' Day; he allows magic lantern services, flower services, services in which dolls are piled up in front of the altar, harvest services, memorial services for the departed, the general tenour of which (I refer to the memorial services for the departed) is unlike anything which the Church has ever sanctioned in reference to the dead, and diametrically opposed to her whole teaching in regard to them. What is the explanation of such conduct?

Is it that anything is permissible except what accords with the ancient practice of the Church of England and the present practice of the Church abroad? And if this be the answer, have we not reason to ask ourselves what such an answer implies, and whether it is one which we are prepared to make our own?

Take another question. I suppose, in view of the practice of the Eastern Church, the prohibition of re-marriage in the case of a divorced person cannot be said to be imposed by Ecumenical authority, but there is no question that such marriages have always been forbidden by the Western Church. It is also beyond question that as long as the Ecclesiastical Courts had cognizance of matrimonial causes in England, that is, up to 1857, a divorce with power to remarry during the lifetime of either of the parties was never granted. It is only the Divorce Act which, since 1857, makes such marriages legal.

Now does the Divorce Act *ipso facto* alter the law of the Church?

I think no Churchman who really faces that question will say so; but, if not, what is to be said of the attitude of those Bishops who issue licences for such marriages?

Are they not on the horns of a dilemma? Must they not assert either that an Act of Parliament is competent *ipso facto* to alter the law of the Church, or that every Bishop in his own diocese, and each Archbishop in his province in England, has the power of dispensing from the law, not merely of the Church of England, but of the whole Western Church, and that in a matter upon which the Western Church has always held dispensations impossible?

No doubt it is possible for a Bishop, as it is for anyone else, to have his private opinion as to what is involved in the passage of St. Matthew, which deals with the subject, but a private opinion does not alter the law of the Church.

THE LAMBETH INQUIRY.

These are questions which have to be faced, and we may perhaps be permitted in the light of them to ask, in regard to such matters as those now being argued before the Archbishops at Lambeth, why, even if it could be demonstrated that the Reformers in 1548, and 1559, and 1662, did intend to forbid the accustomed use of Incense in Divine Service, or a custom of such universal sanction in the Church and of such absolute necessity as that of Reservation, and further that such prohibitions are directly asserted by the Prayer Book, it is less open to a Bishop to dispense from such law in the interests of Catholic Faith and Practice than it is for him to dispense, as so many of the Bishops do, from obedience to what is the clear and acknowledged law of the Church, in the interests of laxity, and the dissolubility of Christian marriage? Is it public opinion and the attitude of the man in the street that make the difference?

No one can have followed the inquiry at Lambeth without being painfully conscious of the assumption underlying the whole of the proceedings, that the vagueness and omissions in the directions of the Prayer Book are not to be interpreted by and harmonised with the practice of the Catholic Church, but that the directions of the Prayer Book are to be determined exclusively by a rigid and legal view of the Act of Uniformity, and by a reference to the supposed intentions of reformers, and by a standard of assumed practice which have and can have no claim on the consciences of Churchmen.

A pastoral explaining to the clergy of a diocese why their Bishop intended in future to order Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament so as to avoid the chance of the dying being deprived of Communion would surely be more in accordance with that primitive practice, and those ecclesiastical principles to which the Church of England appeals, than a pastoral explaining to his clergy that their Bishop was about to contract a second marriage.

These are some of the questions which the present agitation, directly or indirectly, is contributing to raise, and which have to be answered.

Again, the necessity of some ecclesiastical authority to determine questions as they arise, to define the law of the Church, and to maintain a unity of faith and practice within the limits of the Church of England, is being much insisted upon. The present action of the Archbishops has been undertaken to meet this need, and obedience to any decision which may be pronounced by them is asserted as a duty incumbent on all loyal members of the Church of England.

I need hardly say that I welcome the arrangements that have been made for the hearing of spiritual matters before the Archbishops as the bud out of which may develop a normal exercise of spiritual authority on true ecclesiastical principles. But the question also suggests itself why, if the exercise of such an authority is necessary for the Church of England, an extension of the same principle is not equally applicable and equally necessary, on a still wider scale, and for the same reasons. Does not the œcumenical authority of the whole Church require an executive to determine, if occasion should arise, what is the teaching and practice of the whole visible Body of Christ, and, if so, are we not bound to labour for the restoration of those conditions which would alone make the exercise of such an authority possible?

The Anglican Communion is not co-extensive with the whole Church, and unless that fact is steadily kept before our eyes, and its consequences honestly faced, are we not likely to be committed to enunciations of principle, and rules of conduct, which can hardly fail to be productive of most serious difficulty?

These are some of the questions which the present agitation is contributing to raise. They have to be answered, and I do not scruple to give what I believe to be the only answer to them. The difficulties of which we are conscious, and which meet us wherever we touch any

religious question, are chiefly due to the fact that so large a proportion of the inhabitants of this country, including so many professing members of the Church of England, are in the habit of entirely ignoring that great Article of the Creed, with all that flows out of it, "I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church." It was not till this Article of the Creed was forced on the public mind by Dr. Newman in a way that could not be evaded that the Oxford Movement began ; it is only by insisting upon it at all costs, and at all hazards, that the work done by the Oxford Movement, and for ever associated with the names of Newman, Keble, and Pusey, can be carried on, and completed.

This, then, is another reason for thanking Mr. Kensit and his friends. They force us all to face questions which it is most necessary we should face, but which many do not like facing, and among those questions none is more important than the one—What do we mean by, and what is involved in, our profession of belief in "one Catholic and Apostolic Church" ?

BELIEF IN THE CHURCH.

It is worth while to examine the question more closely. Is it consistent with belief in one Catholic and Apostolic Church to teach that the Christian religion consists only in a certain attitude of the mind to Christ, that there is no such thing as a visible Church, that the Sacraments are matters of comparative indifference, that their object is not to confer grace and unite us to Christ, but merely, if insisted on at all, to excite and quicken a Faith which, instead of being the condition of receiving God's gift with profit to the soul, in fact creates the gift which it professes to receive. I need hardly point out that such teaching is absolutely inconsistent with any belief in one Catholic and Apostolic Church as that belief has been understood since the days of the Apostles, but that does not prevent it being very prevalent even amongst pro-

fessing Churchmen, and anything which compels a reconsideration of such a position is a distinct and important gain.

Again, is it consistent with belief in one Catholic and Apostolic Church to insist that the authority of the Church ends with primitive times, and after deciding the date when primitive times come to an end, to make a clean sweep of the teaching of Christendom from that date till the year 1549 when the first English Prayer Book was established by the authority of Parliament, and at that point to invest the formularies of the Church of England with an authority denied to the whole Church during the preceding ten centuries.

This also is a view which widely prevails amongst members of the Church of England, and it is a distinct gain when an agitation like the present compels men to ask themselves how far it is consistent with any real belief in one Catholic and Apostolic Church, and whether the necessary conclusion from such premises is not, instead of "I believe in the Catholic Church," "I believe in the Anglican Communion."

Once these questions are faced, and it is seen that the only teaching consistent with the Article in the Creed, "I believe one Catholic, Apostolic Church," is this, that the Church of England, like every other portion of the Church, is bound in matters of faith by whatever can appeal to the sanction and authority of the whole Church, and that in regard to ceremonial whatever the Church has enjoined must be assumed to be still enjoined, unless she has herself ordered it otherwise, and further, as stated in Elizabeth's Proclamation, directed to be read in all parish churches, that in respect to such alterations no claim was made to change any rite or ceremony before received in the Catholic Church, and we are in possession of a principle which would make an agitation like the present and most of our existing divisions impossible. For example, in matters of doctrine, if the whole Church, as it does, teaches that to refuse to the Blessed Virgin the

title of Mother of God is in fact to deny the Incarnation (for if Mary is not Mother of God, then either the Word was not made flesh, or the Word was not God), and that in the Holy Eucharist there is a sacramental identity between the sign and the thing signified, it will be admitted at once that the Church of England is bound by that teaching, and that none of her members have the right to teach the contrary. So in regard to practice and ceremonial. If the Church of England, in common with the rest of the Church, prescribed, say in 1558, the fast before Communion, or Reservation for the sick and dying, and other similar matters, it will be seen that such is still her rule, unless they be matters within the competence of a National Church to alter, and that she has in fact since that date modified or forbidden them.

Will anyone deny this, or assert that such are not the necessary consequences of a belief that the Church of England is part of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, the existence of which we affirm in the Creed?

THE E. C. U. STATEMENT.

It will be hard for anyone to do so, yet it is precisely for acting on these principles and for nothing else that the clergy are being attacked, as it is for asserting the consequence of these principles and for nothing else that the Members of the Union have been attacked, ever since our Meeting in February, throughout the length and breadth of the country. What did the Statement put out by the Union at that time affirm? It affirmed that the Reformers set up no new Church in England in the sixteenth century, and that the Church of England cannot, consistently with her claim to be a part of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, release herself from the obligations imposed upon her by the profession of the Catholic Faith and her relations to the rest of the Church.

Are there any who seriously affirm the opposite? If they do, let them be consistent, and cease any longer to profess their belief in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The Statement affirmed that what the Church of England has ordered and prescribed the same remains in force, unless in regard to such matters as it is within the competence of a National Church to alter, she has herself ordered otherwise. What is the offence here?

If that is not the true rule which governs the practice and ceremonial of the Church, what is?

Will you say, as appears to have been stated by Mr. Arthur Balfour in the House of Commons on Mr. Gedge's motion, that it is the tradition and practice of the Church of England as it has been understood for the last 300 years?

If so, I would ask on what principle do you limit the tradition and practice of the Church of England to the last 300 years, and what is the tradition and practice to which you appeal? Is it to the well-known wishes of Elizabeth, when she was insisting on retaining the Ornaments of the first and second years of Edward VI., when she was rejecting her father's claim to be "Head of the Church," and making overtures to Paul IV., to acknowledge his supremacy if he would recognize her right to the throne, and when later on she actually restored certain features from Edward VI.'s first book in the Latin translation of the Prayer Book put out for the use of the Universities? Or is it the tradition and practice of the later years of the reign of Elizabeth, when the doctrine of the Church of England was almost entirely obscured by Calvinism, and when in regard to practice it was found difficult to enforce the use even of a surplice, and when in many parts of the country Divine Service almost ceased? Is it the traditions which attach to the names of Bishop Andrewes and Archbishop Laud and the Caroline Divines? But the principle which underlies the revival of doctrine and ceremonial with which those divines were associated was the assertion of the continuity of the Church of England, and the authority of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is the precise point now at issue.

Is it the tradition of the eighteenth and the early part

of the nineteenth century prior to the Oxford Movement—the time when Convocation was suppressed, as it was for nearly one hundred and fifty years? But it is admitted that religion was never at so low an ebb as during the eighteenth century, when Deism had well nigh supplanted Christianity; while the tradition of the early years of the nineteenth century would justify little else but celebrations of Holy Communion four times a year, a worldly clergy, pewed up churches, and all the neglect and abuses from which the Oxford Movement has delivered the Church.

THE AIMS OF THE AGITATORS.

Are these the traditions to which you wish to return? Do you prefer them to the restored churches, the frequent services, the devoted clergy, the unbounded spiritual activities you see around you?

These are some of the questions to which the present agitation compels an answer. They can only be answered in one way, and that way is the most complete, the most entire justification of the attitude taken up by the Union.

Again, the agitation suggests other observations, which must not be neglected. It will be remembered that when Mr. Kensit began his operations by brawling during Divine Service at St. Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, and at St. Cuthbert's, West Kensington, parishes, be it noted, with which he had nothing to do, we were told the agitation was only directed against the extreme Ritualists, and not at all against the High Church party as a whole.

Next, that the agitation was aimed at ritual and not at doctrine, and thirdly, that it was inspired by an honest desire to vindicate the duty of obedience to the law of the Church, and observance of the rubrics of the Prayer Book, against lawlessness and disobedience.

Let us examine these points in detail and see how the facts of the case bear out these statements.

The attack is only directed against the "Extreme Ritualists." What has recently been stated in the House of Commons? "How long," asked Mr. Mellor, on the

second reading of the Church Discipline Bill, "are we to wait for the action of the Bishops? We have waited too long already; this evil is one of some sixty years' standing, it dates from the early days of Dr. Newman and Dr. Pusey, it has its origin in the beginning of the Oxford Movement. It is the Oxford Movement which must be swept away and eradicated."

I quote Mr. Mellor; for his speech, repeated as it afterwards was at Bath, shows that this is not the unguarded utterance of an impassioned oratory; but that he only expressed what has come to be the avowed object of the present agitation.

I hope the fact will be noted by those whom it is the fashion to call the "Historical High Church Party." It will enable those so designated to understand exactly what is intended when they are asked to separate themselves from the Members of the Union. They will know, if they do, that it will be their own turn next; and that in sacrificing the Union they will only be hastening the day of their own destruction. I think we may say here, with some confidence, "in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." As for Mr. Mellor, and those who think with him, they are right to fear delay. Such a crusade as he advocates against the whole body of those who represent the Oxford Movement must either end in an ignominious failure, or in disestablishing the Church, and the moment this is perceived, Mr. Mellor, and others like him, will find that any chance they may have had of conducting a successful agitation against those who thank God for all Newman, Pusey, and Keble did for the Church of England will have completely disappeared. We are not the least afraid of Mr. Mellor and those for whom he speaks. There are worse evils than disestablishment. And it is just as well that those responsible for the present agitation should realize that fact once for all. Meanwhile such speeches do us the invaluable service of giving another conspicuous proof of how right we were, when we said that it was not a section of what are called extreme

men who are the objects of the present attack, but all the followers of Mr. Keble and Dr. Pusey.

CEREMONIAL OR DOCTRINE—WHICH ?

I pass to the second assertion made by those responsible for the agitation. We were told it was not doctrine, but ceremonial, that was objected to, and we were asked how it was possible for reasonable men to risk the whole position of the Church for the sake merely of externals. It has now been admitted in both Houses of Parliament that it is not this or that detail of ritual that signifies, but the teaching of Confession and Absolution, and the doctrine of the Church as to the Real Presence and the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Members of the House of Commons declaim against such teaching in one House and members of the House of Lords in the other. "The Church of England has nothing to do with Confession to a priest." So it is declared in the Lords. The Confessional and the Mass, it is asserted in the Commons, must be put down at all costs. What a pity it is that Members of Parliament should talk of subjects of which they apparently know so little. If those who are responsible for such assertions had been at Lambeth during the present inquiry they would have found out that what is held by the lawyers representing the Bishops of London and Norwich, to determine the use of the ornaments prescribed by the Church turns almost entirely on the ornaments prescribed by or used under a book in which the Office for the Holy Communion is said to be "commonly called the Mass."

The fact may be commended also to the attention of Mr. Austen Taylor and those responsible for the Liverpool Church Discipline Bill, with the suggestion that one result of the agitation may not impossibly be to array the Archdeacon of Liverpool in those Mass vestments the use of which under the Liverpool Bill is to subject a priest to the penalty of deprivation. A little knowledge of the Prayer Book and of the history of the Church of England

would prevent such statements, just as it would also show that the teaching of the Church of England on the subject of Confession and Absolution is too clear to be got rid of by anything Members of Parliament may choose to say on the subject. Let me emphasize this point, for it is a good illustration of the fact that it is not we, but those who attack us, who are disloyal to the Prayer Book in this matter.

It is a commonplace in all Christian teaching that we should live to-day as if we were to die to-morrow. If, then, every sick person whose conscience is troubled with any weighty matter is to be exhorted, according to the directions of the Prayer Book, by the priest to make his confession, in order that he may receive absolution, it is abundantly clear—unless indeed mortal sin is only a weighty matter in the prospect of immediate death—that everyone who at any time has any serious matter on his conscience is to be exhorted by the priest to do the like.

Let this fact, together with the instructions contained in the Exhortation to Communion, once be fully recognised, and it will be seen that the Church of England does not leave the duty of Confession an open question for those who have any serious matter on their conscience; and, further, that by the power of absolution which the Church of England recognises as attaching to the priestly office, she encourages her children to avail themselves of this means of obtaining forgiveness of all their sins, as often as any individual conscience may feel that it has need of it.

Why, if absolution is a reality, am I to be prevented seeking the benefit of it as often as I choose? The way the question of absolution is ignored in all that is said on the subject is the best proof of the dishonesty of the whole of this agitation.

Englishmen have the same consciousness of sin, the same fear of a judgment to come, the same need of repentance, the same need of forgiveness, as other Christians who do not happen to be British subjects; and

to say that they will never accept or comply with the conditions which God has appointed for the satisfaction of wants common to mankind, is to exhibit a complete ignorance of human nature, and to talk irreverent nonsense besides. Human nature is the same all the world over; and though Englishmen will never submit, and are right never to submit, to the interference of the clergy in their temporal and political concerns, they will welcome as their best friends those among the clergy who have the faith and the courage to tell them plainly, without fear or shrinking, those things which they have to believe and do if they would obtain for themselves the full happiness of the Christian life, and prove themselves faithful and devoted members of the Catholic Church.

OBEDIENCE TO THE PRAYER BOOK.

I go on to deal with the assertion that the present agitation is inspired by a simple desire to vindicate the law of the Church, and to insist that the provisions of the Prayer Book shall be obeyed.

What were we told on this subject only the other day in the House of Commons? Why, this—that the object of legislation was not to enforce strict obedience to the provisions of the Prayer Book which might be inconvenient, but to put down practices and doctrines which were objectionable.

Would the promoters of the Church Discipline Bill, it was asked by Sir John Kennaway, and I cannot mention Sir John Kennaway's name without mentioning the respect and admiration I entertain for his character, like to see themselves compelled to wear the vestments if it should be held, which was not improbable, that they were ordered by the Ornaments Rubric?

No one wants to compel the clergy who dislike them, no one wants to compel even the Archdeacon of Liverpool, to wear the vestments, but such a plea shows how much truth there is in the assertion that the object of the present agitation is merely to enforce obedience to the

rubrics of the Prayer Book, irrespective of what they are. What its object really is is to enforce a discredited interpretation of the rubrics, which happens to be agreeable to a certain party in the Church, upon those who maintain that that interpretation does the Church of England gross injustice. It has nothing to do with a respect for law as such. A reference to the Declaration prefixed to the Articles would have given conclusive proof of this from the first.

That Declaration states explicitly "That if any difference arise concerning the Injunctions, Canons, and other Constitutions" of the Church of England, "the Bishops and Clergy in Convocation are to have leave to deliberate of and make plain all such things as concerned the settled continuance of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England." But this is the one thing which those responsible for the present agitation have protested against with the greatest vehemence. "Not the clergy in their Convocations, but the members of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council who are to interpret the laws of the Church." It is the Committee of the Privy Council which is to determine the doctrine of the Church." The Church is to be governed by the laity, that is "by Parliament, of which neither the members nor the electors are under any obligation of professing the Christian Faith." "It is the laity of Great Britain and Ireland who are to decide what concerns the Church, and what they decide may or may not be in conformity with the wishes of the laity of the Church of England." The law of the Church subsists by the will of the State, and of the State alone." "The Church possesses nothing more than a legal status. There is no distinction in constitutional theory between the Church of England and, let us say, the Bar of England." "The Church is the subject of Parliament, its masters are the laity, and the clergy merely their officials." I quote at random some of the assertions which have recently been made in Parliament and elsewhere on this subject, and I

ask whether it is possible to see a more flagrant and direct contradiction than exists between them and the Declaration affixed to the Articles?

And yet, it is the very persons who are responsible for these assertions who accuse us of disloyalty both to Church and State. It is in the face of such assertions that we have declared and declare again that Christ is the Head of the Church, and that His Church must be governed in the way He has prescribed, and not as it may please a Parliament of all creeds, or a committee of lawyers to determine. Is it disloyal to the Church, is it disloyal to the State, to assert this? We should be disloyal to both if we did not assert it. No, it is not we who are disloyal to the Prayer Book, it is not we who are the dishonest members of the Church, but it is those who accuse us of disloyalty, and at the same time assert that the great sin of the Church of England in the past—the sin for which she has to do penance in the present—is her action in 1662 when she gave us our present Prayer Book. It is those who invoke the help of Nonconformists to purge the Prayer Book of what they call the dregs of Popery. It is the Kensits, with their dissemination of what they denounce as obscene literature, it is the Walshes with their indirect and ingenious methods for suggesting falsehood, and for insinuating charges they cannot make directly. It is those who, by their innuendos, would seem to imply that absolution and celibacy are inseparable from breaches of the Seventh Commandment. It is those who assert that the present agitation is the result of a growing divergence between the clergy on one side and the laity on the other. It is those who disguise their political animosities under the garb of religion, and who combine a professed zeal for Protestantism with never entering a church themselves. It is those who, like the promoters of the Albert Hall meeting, with their stories of mythical donkeys and ineptitudes of the same sort, make charges they cannot substantiate but will not withdraw—in a word, it is all those who for the last three

months have attacked the Members of this Union with the utmost virulence, on the ground of alleged disobedience to obligations they entirely disregard themselves.

THE ATTACK A RECRUDESCENCE OF PURITANISM.

The real truth about the present agitation is, that it is an agitation got up and paid for by that Puritanism which nearly destroyed the Church of England under Elizabeth, which abolished the Prayer Book by law in 1645, which invented the Popish Plot after the Restoration and utilised it to put an innocent man like Lord Stafford to death, which in our own time tried to drive Dr. Pusey and Mr. Keble out of the Church, and now expresses its regret for having failed to do so, and which in the Bill it has recently introduced into Parliament for the exercise of Church discipline, and by its attempts to stir up strife all over the country, shows that it has learnt nothing from the past, and that it is not the will, but the power, which it lacks in order to repeat the measures it once took with such disastrous effect for purging the Church of England of what it calls superstition and popery.

Let me just remind you what some of those measures were, when for a short time, for England's misfortune, it got the upper hand. On July 10th, 1641, it was decided by Parliament "that Ecclesiastical power for the government of the Church should be exercised by Commissions, and that Archiepiscopal and Episcopal jurisdiction should be taken away."

This is exactly what was proposed the other day by the Liverpool Church Discipline Bill.

A little later it was ordered in Parliament that all altars, crucifixes, images of the Blessed Virgin, tapers, candlesticks, chancel steps, should be destroyed, and all bowing at the name of Jesus be forborne.

This again exactly repeats what is advocated by the Church Association and its supporters in Parliament and throughout the country. Hundreds of clergy were prosecuted for bowing to the altar, and other ritual observances,

such, for example, as obliging communicants to come up to the altar to receive the Sacrament. Here we see the provisions of the Liverpool Bill in full operation.

The observance of Christmas Day and other festivals was made illegal on the ground that they were "the Papist's Massing Days." Here we again see the spirit of the Liverpool Bill. And finally, the use of the Prayer Book was forbidden, not only in church, but in any private family, all copies of it ordered to be confiscated, and any persons using it were imprisoned.

It has been reckoned that some 8,000 clergy who refused to comply with these orders were deprived—a result which enables us again to estimate what the consequences of the Liverpool Bill, or any similar legislation, would be likely to be.

Do you welcome the prospect? If you do not it will be well that you should make your mind clearly known; for it is plain that we are in the presence of an organized attempt, well supplied with money, and perfectly unscrupulous as to the means it employs, to put down the teaching and ceremonial enjoined by the Book of Common Prayer.

THE CAUSE THE SAME AS OF OLD.

We are fighting to-day for the same principles as those for which we have been fighting for the last forty years. We are fighting for the principle of the continuity of the Church of England, for the maintenance of Catholic doctrine and practice as taught and sanctioned by the whole Church, of which the Church of England is but a part, and to which she makes her appeal. We are fighting for these things against those who would deprive us of all those external links which proclaim our one-ness with the rest of the Catholic Church, and of which an evil tradition in the past has well nigh deprived us. We are fighting for the right of the Church of England to determine her own spiritual affairs, for her right to decide her own doctrine and discipline, free from the interference of those who do not belong to her fold—in a word, for the inherent

spiritual rights of the Church of England in the respective spheres of doctrine, ceremonial, and discipline. It is a just cause, it is a noble cause, and it is a cause which bears with it the promise of the future.

Men's minds, with the exception of those of a few fanatics who are of no real importance, are set in the direction, not of coercion, but of liberty, not in the direction of exclusion, but of inclusion, not of disintegration, but of re-union. Of the success of that cause we can have no doubt. If God has borne with us through all the dreary days of the past, when Christian doctrine and Christian practice seemed alike forgotten, when Holy Communion was hardly ever celebrated, when our churches were in a disgraceful state of dirt and decay, when the clergy were indifferent to their spiritual duties, and the Prayer Book ignored and neglected, He will not forsake those who on all sides, men and women, young and old, clergy and laity, are all animated by the one desire of rebuilding the walls of the Sanctuary, of restoring the old waste places, the desolations of many generations, and of winning back all souls to Christ. It is for this that our Union has been formed, it is for this that it is continued. These are the objects it is bound to vindicate and maintain. As I look back to the past I see nothing to retract or unsay; of the eventual triumph of our principles I am assured. How that triumph will be brought about we do not know, nor need it concern us much. We have a simple duty, to bear witness to what we know to be the truth, and with God's help we shall not shrink from that duty. Meanwhile it is pleasant to know that some 7,000 Members have joined the Union since the end of September. I do not think I have ever pressed anyone to join the Union—I shall not begin to do so now—but we *are* grateful, very grateful, to those who, at a time when nothing is to be gained by joining our ranks but reproach and misrepresentation, have freely cast in their lot with us in order to show, in a day when foes are many and adversaries are being stirred up on all sides, that they do not shrink from what is supposed

to be an unpopular cause, and are not ashamed to bear witness with us to the rights and liberties of the Church of God in this land.

LAST WORDS.

To conclude. What is said to-day is likely to be read by many who are not our own Members. To them I would say this :—

The witness of the Church and the witness of Holy Scripture alike testify to the fact that God has bestowed upon us the glory which belongs to the Only Begotten Son. That Divine nature is imparted to us in the Blessed Sacrament. Christ in the Holy Sacrifice offers His Body and Blood in commemoration of His Death and Passion to the Father, and then in Communion gives that Body and Blood to us.

He calls upon us, even us, to take part in the Sacrifice which He, through His priests, offers at every altar of His Church.

This is why the Church has always desired that the celebration of the Holy Mysteries should be surrounded with all those accessories of beauty and worship which befit so divine a service.

This is why she has always reserved the Blessed Sacrament, in order that He Who, when visible on earth, went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the Devil, might in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood be the abiding stay and support of the sick and suffering, and the food, in the strength of which the dying should be enabled to tread the way that leads to the Mount of God.

This is why she proclaims and has always proclaimed the doctrine of the remission of sins, first in Baptism, and then by the word of absolution pronounced by the priest. These are the matters which are now the subjects of attack. They are matters which touch the whole of our spiritual life.

May it please God so to overrule the action of the Bishops of the Church—for it is with them that the issue mainly rests—that the assault which has been stirred up against the doctrine and practice of the Church may be repelled, and that after the storm there may be peace.







